

Message Text

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SUBJ: GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA AND LIBERAL OPPOSITION STATEMENTS
ON EXTENSIONS AT DIEGO GARCIA

REF: CANBERRA 0775

1. SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUED ON FEB 11
STATEMENT ON DIEGO GARCIA BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
WILLESEE WHICH IDENTICAL, WITH ONLY SLIGHT CHANGES, WITH
STATEMENT MADE BY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TO PRESS FEB 7 (PARA 2
REFTEL). LIBERAL OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN ISSUED STATEMENT FEB
11 WHICH STRONGLY SUPPORTS U.S. ACTION IN EXTENDING FACILITIES
AT DIEGO GARCIA AND SHARPLY CRITICIZES WHITLAM GOVERNMENT FOR
"INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO GRASP REALITIES OF INTERNATIONAL
SITUATION." END SUMMARY.

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2. AUSTRALIAN DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUED ON FEB 11 STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILLESEE WHICH IS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH STATEMENT MADE BY DEPT SPOKESMAN TO PRESS FEB 7 (PARA 2 REFTTEL). WHEREAS STATEMENT BY SPOKESMAN WAS APPROVED BY WILLESEE, IT WAS NOT IN QUOTATION MARKS, RELEASE OF FEB 11 IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO WILLESEE WITH ADDITION OF "SENATOR WILLESEE SAID" HERE AND THERE.

3. HIGH POINTS OF STATEMENT BY LIBERAL OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN AS FOLLOWS:

QTE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO DAMAGE AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. EVEN WHEN THE ACTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY SERVE AUSTRALIA'S INTERESTS, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IS CRITICAL.

QTE THE UNITED STATES' DECISION TO EXTEND SUPPORT FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WILL CLEARLY CONTRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS IN EFFECT OPPOSED THE UNITED STATES' DECISION.

QTE THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT TODAY EMPHASIZES THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S DOUBLE STANDARDS IN FOREIGN POLICY AND THEIR INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO GRASP THE REALITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION.

QTE THERE HAS BEEN A RAPID BUILDUP OF SOVIET NAVAL FORCES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ABOUT WHICH THE LBAOR GOVERNMENT HAS SAID LITTLE AND DONE NOTHING.

QTE THE DECISION OF THE UNITED STATES TO EXTEND SUPPORT FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA IS A RESPONSE TO THIS BUILDUP OF SOVIET FORCES.

QTE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT THIS DECISION BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT....

QTE THE CONCEPT OF A ZONE OF PEACE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS A LONG TERM ASPIRATION, IMPRACTICAL IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. REALITIES HAVE TO BE FACED.SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD DEPEND ON THE CONCURRENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES. BY ITS BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN THE SOVIET UNION HAS EFFECTIVELY DISOWNED SUCH A PROPOSAL. THE UNITED STATES' RESPONSE IS IMPORTANT TO AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY.... END QTE

4. MELBOURNE AGE FEB 11 CARRIED EDITORIAL STATING INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE IS VERY DIFFICULT TO REALIZE. IT STATES, "WHO COULD BE AGAINST A "ZONE OF PEACE"? THE CONCEPT IS AS STAIN-FREE AS

MOTHERHOOD, BUT MUCH LESS EASILY ATTAINABLE. IT WILL TAKE THE
CONSENT, NOT JUST OF TWO ADULTS, BUT OF WHOLE RANGE OF SUPERPOWERS
AND POWERS TO TURN THE INDIAN OCEAN INTO A PEACEFUL LAKE. THE
THEORY IS FINE, THE SENTIMENTS TOUCHING, BUT THE REALITIES ARE
AGAINST IT....WE WILL HAVE TO LIVE FOR THE PRESENT WITH THE
VARIOUS PRESENCES WHILE WORKING FOR THE REDUCTION OF TENSION
IN THE REGION AND THE PROPER CONDITIONS--AS OPPOSED TO THE WISHFUL
THINKING--WHICH WILL PRODUCE A ZONE OF PEACE."
HARROP

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